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A Scientific Basis for the Granting of
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ARTISTS' DIVISION
(GRADE SIX)

CHAPTER VI

PREPARED BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF THE

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v.6-7

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VI

BALLADE

G MINOR

EDVARD GRIEG

Opus 24

This Ballade is the creation of the "greater Grieg," possessing all the charm, originality and national color found in his many and popular smaller works, but with added dignity and grandness in consonance with the larger form. Because of his marked originality and individualism, Grieg has sometimes been criticized as one who "stuck in the fjord and never got out of it." Yet it is this same originality, this freedom from the conventional, together with his wealth of melody and his unvarying good taste, that has won for Grieg a permanent place among the great composers. The composition is conceived in the form of Variations upon a Norwegian folk-tune, a theme whose beauty at once impresses us deeply.

The Theme.—This Theme should be announced with simplicity, in a warm tone color, and extremely *legato.* Observe the chromatic nature of the accompanying voices, especially the way in which the lowest voice descends gradually to the end of the first part.

Variation I.—The First Variation should be played slightly faster than the Theme. It is further characterized by great delicacy. The Theme, though in general well concealed, emerges here and there with clearness, and the gradual animation in the movement prepares one for the more animated *tempo* of the next Variation.

Variation II.—This Variation, marked *allegro agitato,* is to be played in a bold style. The tone volume increases to a marked *fortissimo* (39). The following *dolcissimo* passages (41-42) (43-44) should be supported throughout with the Damper Pedal, stressing the opening Bass note of each passage very slightly and then diminishing to the end.

Variation III.—In this Variation, to be played *adagio,* the Theme, which is in Thirds, should sing with an elegiac quality in the inner voices, surrounded with swaying *arpeggi*—like soft, melancholy winds sighing through the pines of a Norwegian forest. Twice toward the end (60) (62) it rises as if to throw off darkness and gloom, but sinks back again to its heavy sadness. The accents upon the second *sixteenth* notes of the figures marked *agitato e stretto,* should be sharply emphasized, and the pedaling should slightly overlap throughout this passage.

Variation IV.—By way of contrast, a tripping lightness suggestive of sleighbells, laughter and the joy of winter sports characterizes this Variation (65). The frequent accents on the third count of the measure must be firmly sounded. The student need have no hesitation in pedaling a fair amount of dissonance into the measures not marked *staccato.* The capricious spirit admits of a slight acceleration in alternate measures, but with rhythmical steadiness in the intermediate ones. This should not be applied in a way that will call attention to a mechanical fluctuation of *tempo,* but may be left to the taste of the performer.

Variation V.—The *recitando* passage (81) with which the next Variation begins, should be attacked boldly and with depth of tone; and the answer (83) should each time be given with simplicity and tenderness. There is great breadth and dignity in this declamatory passage. In the third *period* (97) the Damper Pedal may be held with good effect throughout the second and third measure. Each count should be slightly stressed. If the repetition is observed, it is advised to play the last *recitando* passage (*f risoluto*) in Octaves for the right hand, so as to introduce a new coloring, one of dramatic resolution.

Variation VI.—In this Variation the *tempo* hastens continually, first one hand and then the other leading the way. It must be played in a spirit of caprice, which is well carried out in the dynamic markings; these should be carefully heeded. No pause is to be made at the close, the next Variation following at once. This and the next are the most difficult of the set. The double note *motive* may profitably be practised in the form of a slow Trill, either each hand alone, or both hands together, the left hand beginning with the right.

Variation VII.—The Canonic imitation of the seventh Variation reaches a climax every four measures, and each time it quickly recedes, imme-

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diately to begin another climb. The *staccato* should be thrown off sharply, like sparks of fire. It is important to note the emphasis given to the left-hand part in the second half of the first *period* (125-128). The contrasting *legato* measures (129-132) require special care in pedaling. The Variation closes abruptly on the Dominant, after which a pronounced pause should be made. First study this Variation with both hands playing in unison, then in canon, as written. In the last four measures of this Variation it will be effective to give more volume of tone to the left-hand part than to the right.

VARIATION VIII.—The beginning (137) of this somber and tragic Variation should be played *pianissimo* throughout, in slow and steady rhythm —a *cortège* passing in the distance. Grieg's pianistic imagination never having been overfertile, it is suggested that an effective change might be to play the detached Octaves in the right-hand part, last four measures, beginning at *a tempo,* an Octave higher, imitating the ringing of distant bells.

VARIATION IX.—In the spirit of an Impromptu this Variation impresses the listener with a sense of rare lyric beauty. A free use of *rubato* is appropriate here, and a copious, but judicious use of the Damper Pedal. Throughout the two-voice passage in the upper registers (171-176) the Damper Pedal also may be sustained along with the *una corda* pedal, thus inducing a free vibration of overtones which blend into a mysterious tonal haze. It is released only when the sustained $B\flat$ with insistent repetition breaks its way into the mood picture and ushers in the closing measures, a reminder of the spirit in which the movement opens.

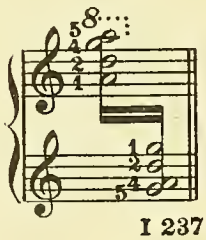
VARIATION X.—Like a mountain stream this Variation dances boldly along. The general movement should never lag, no matter how complex the *chords* may appear to be. Wrists of iron strength are no more than adequate for the climax (206-207). The *arpeggiated* Seventh Chords should be sharply "whirled off" in their chromatic upward climb. With the rhythmic *motive* of the Subject used as an Organpoint we are led through a masterly development of twenty measures (208) to the final Variation.

VARIATION XI.—The Theme, now all-powerful, sweeps broadly forward with compelling majesty, as a stream rushes into the fjord, with all its grandeur and beauty. The *Allegro furioso* perfectly fulfils its mission as a *finale.* Through a maze of bewildering chromatic progressions, piling one *crescendo* upon another, the composer builds up a climax of such intensity as to tax severely the tonal resources of the piano. After this titanic effort, when the last ounce of strength seems to have been expended, there follows suddenly a crash (325) on the low $E\flat$ which gradually settles into the *D* below. A pause of some length should elapse before the entrance of the Closing Theme, which should be played with great simplicity and in a markedly *cantabile* style. The extremely difficult Double Trill two measures before the entrance of the three-four time may be rendered easier, and also more effective, by playing it in the form of *tremolo* alternating between the hands, beginning with the right. The right hand plays the notes *A, D, G, A,* as a solid chord, and the left hand *G, A, D, G.* These two chords, played as a rapid *tremolo* between the two hands, will closely approximate the effect of a Double Trill, and will be far more brilliant, as shown in Illustration No. 1.

This Ballade is considered to be the finest of Grieg's achievements as a composer for the piano. Frank Van der Stucken, an American conductor of eminence, contributed some reminiscences of Grieg to the "Life of Grieg," by Henry T. Finck. In the course of these comments he says: "I heard him play his Ballade, a composition that he wrote with his 'heart's blood in days of sadness and despair.' There is no doubt that this beautiful composition is his favorite work, and I believe that all deeper-minded musicians agree with him."

Mr. Finck classifies this Ballade as belonging to the Greater Grieg. "It requires study," he says, "for a full appreciation of its recondite and subtle charms, although, the beautiful, plaintive theme itself makes a deep impression at once. The sombre spirit of the theme pervades some of the variations; others suggest features of Norwegian landscapes, of dance and national hymn, and there is a grand climax in which the orchestral resources of the piano are exhausted."

Ill. No. 1.



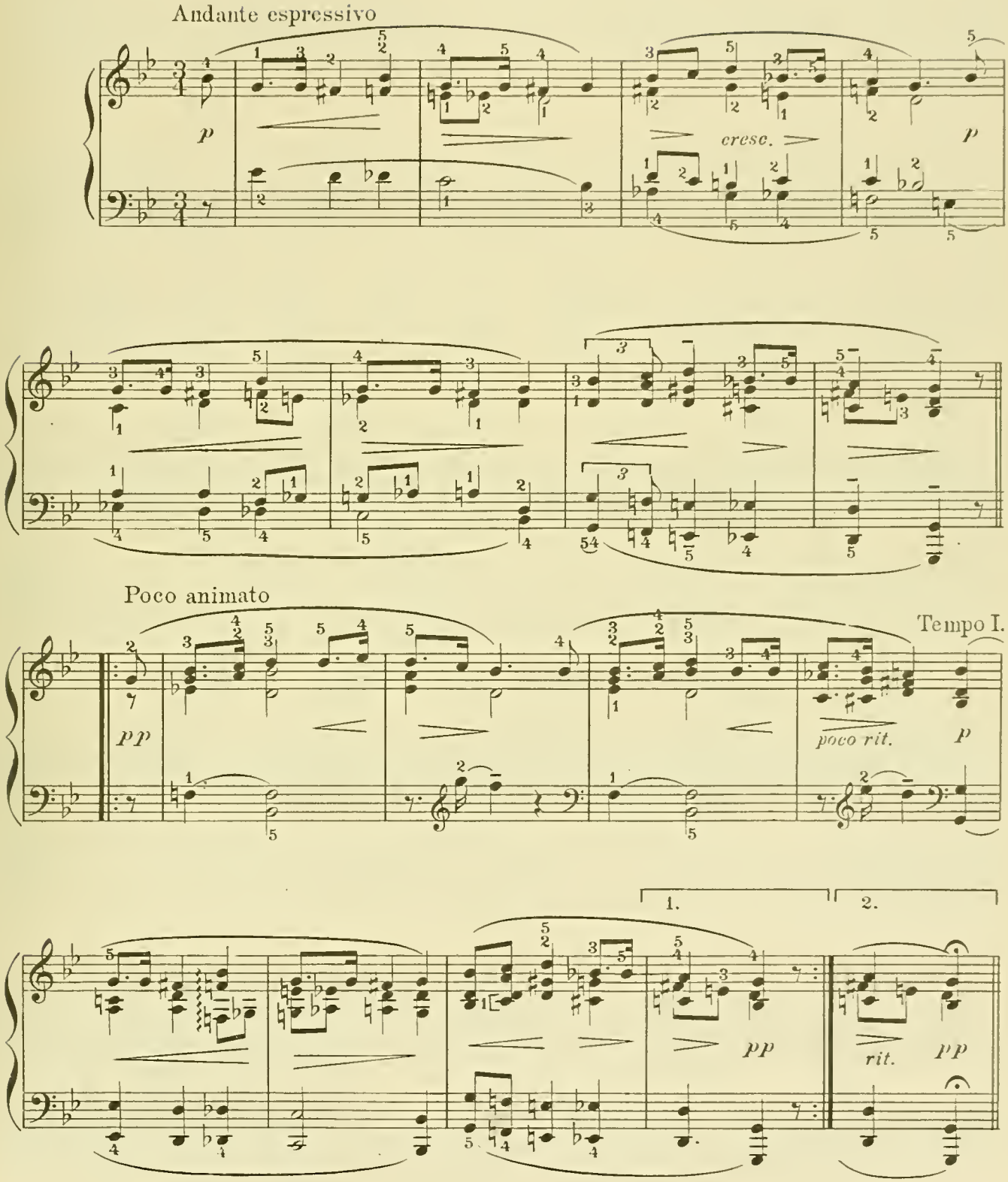
I 237

Brahms was an admirer of this composition. Walter Niemann, a German critic, calls it "the most perfect musical embodiment of Norway and the Norwegian people, and at the same time the most perfect embodiment in music of Greig the man."

BALLADE

Edited by
Donald M. Swarthout

EDVARD GRIEG
Op. 24



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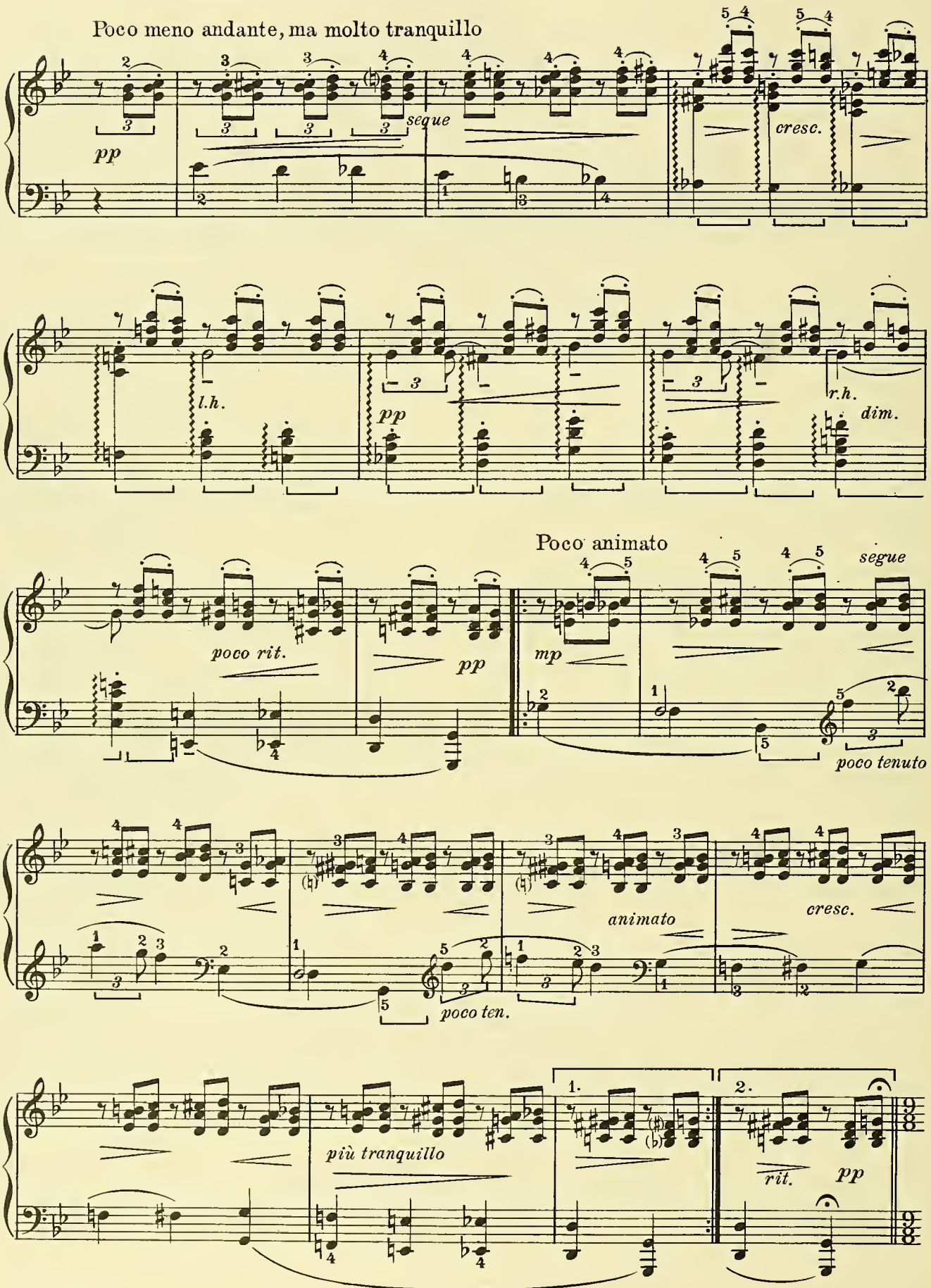
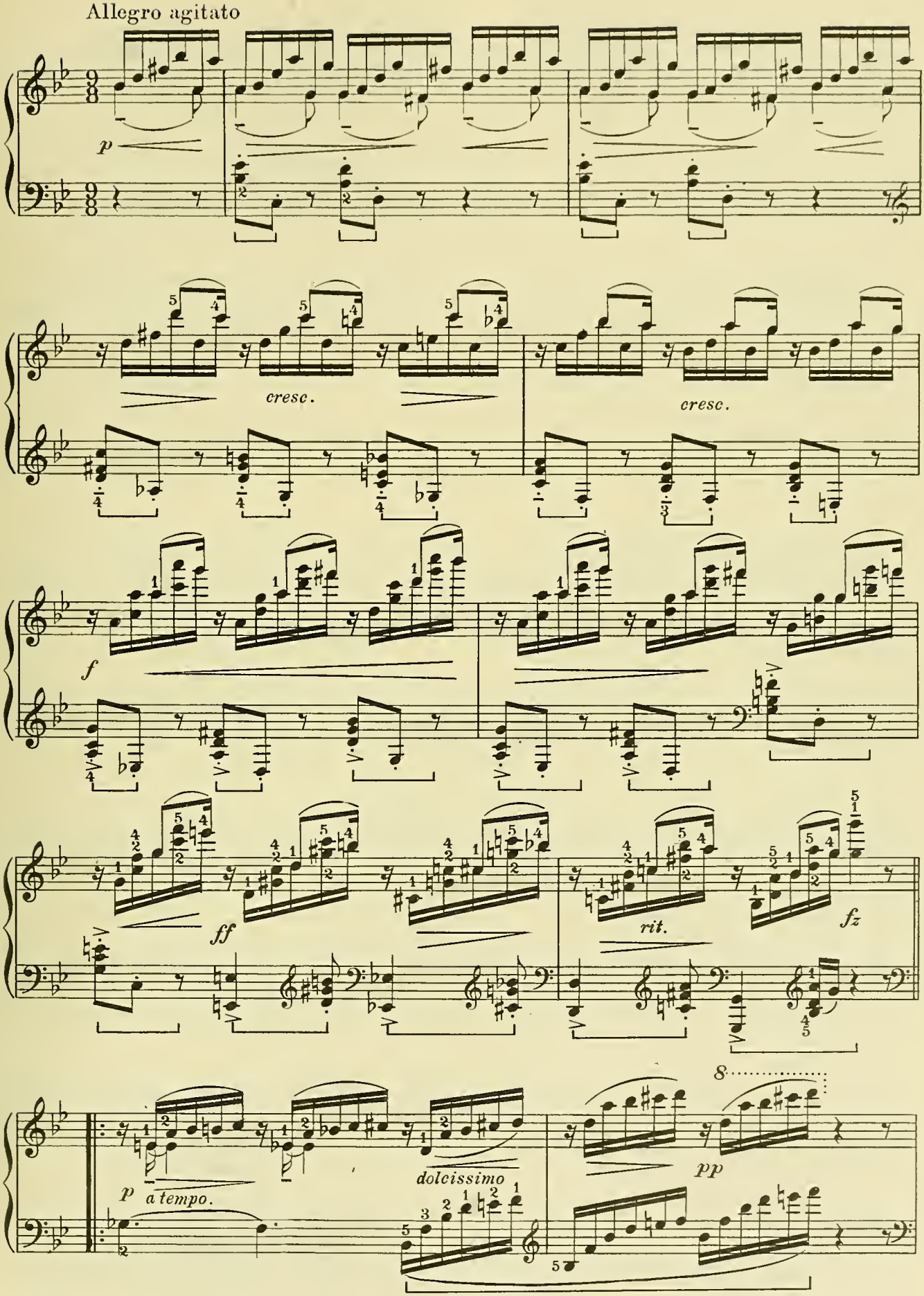
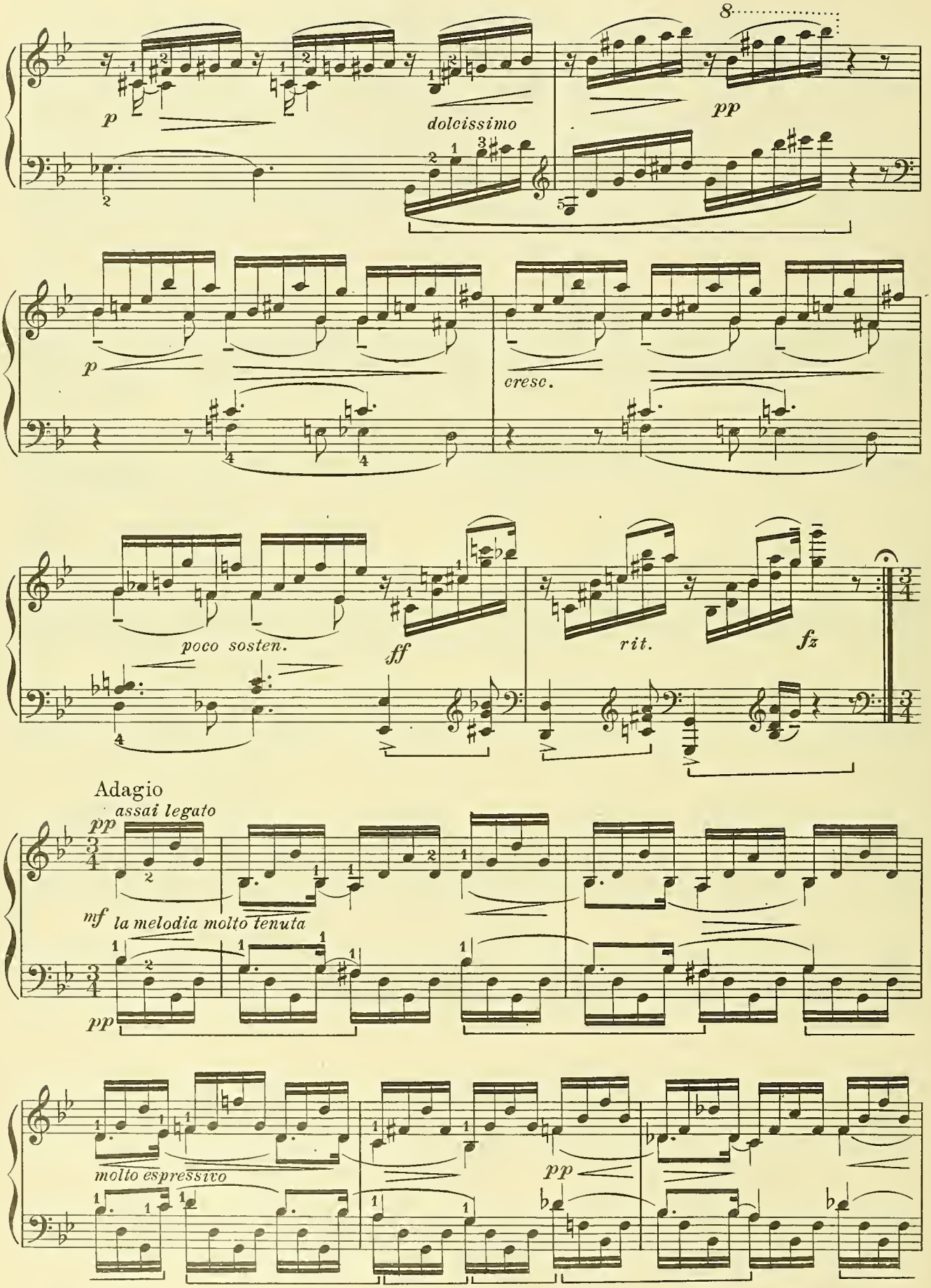
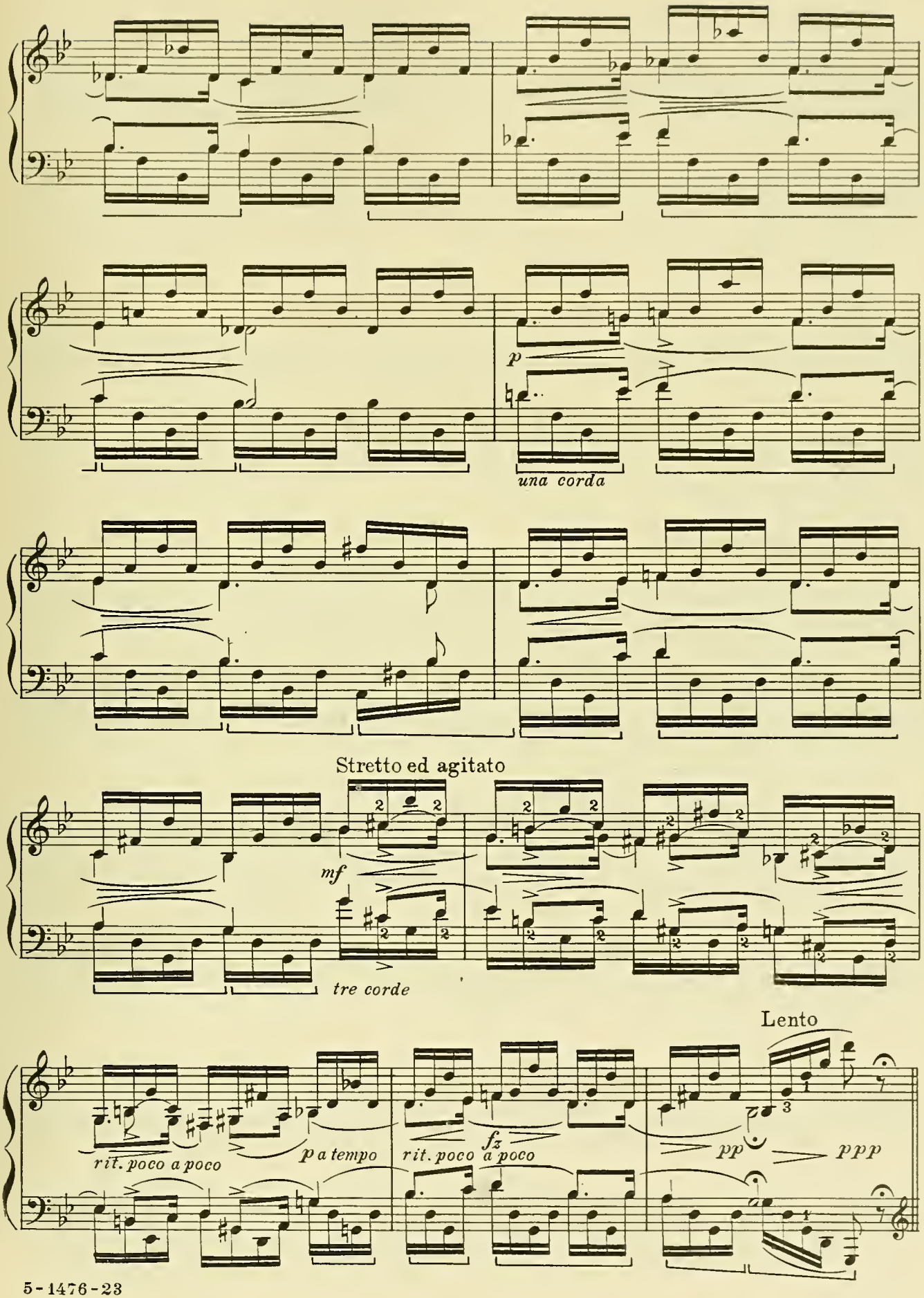
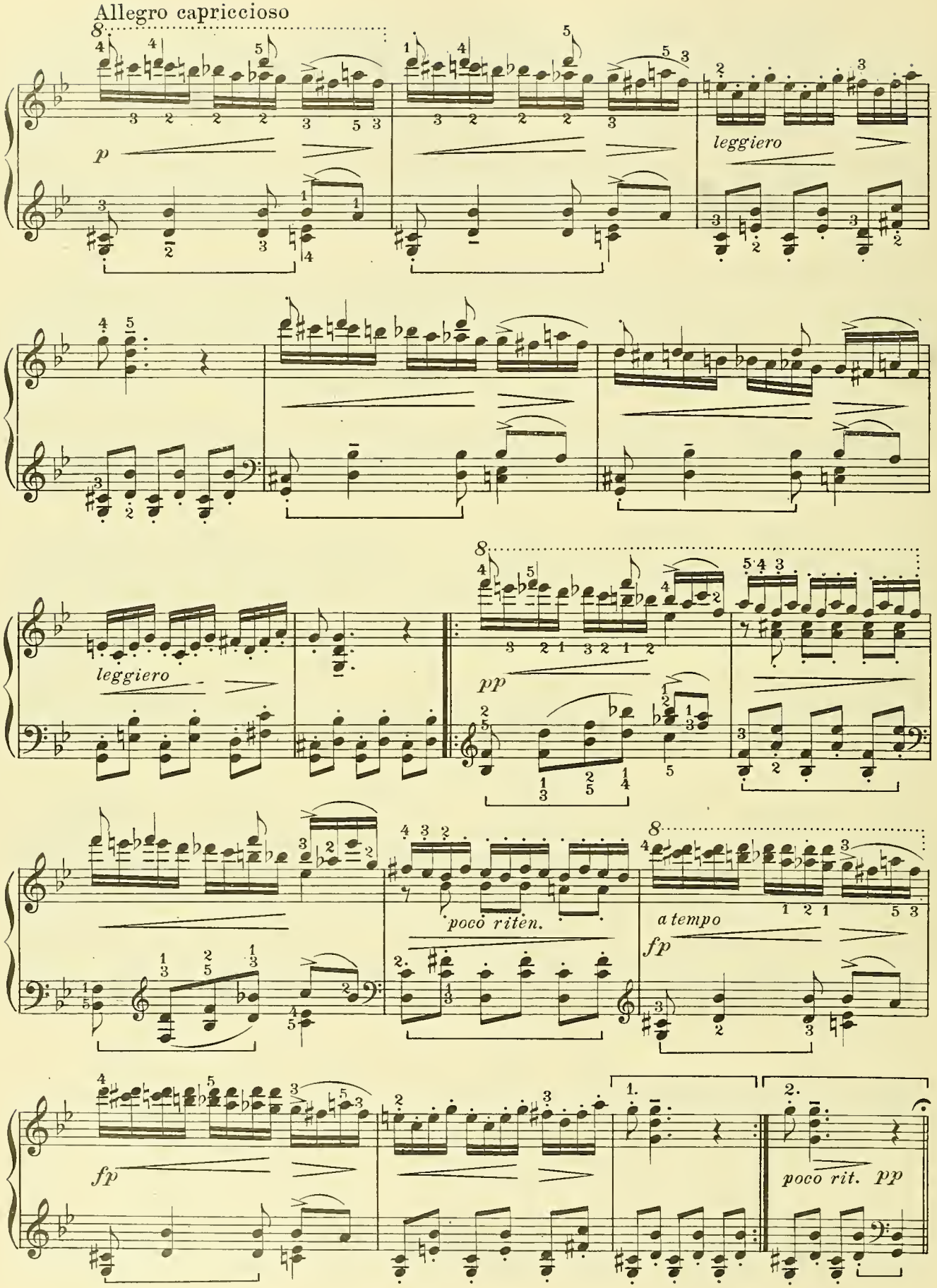
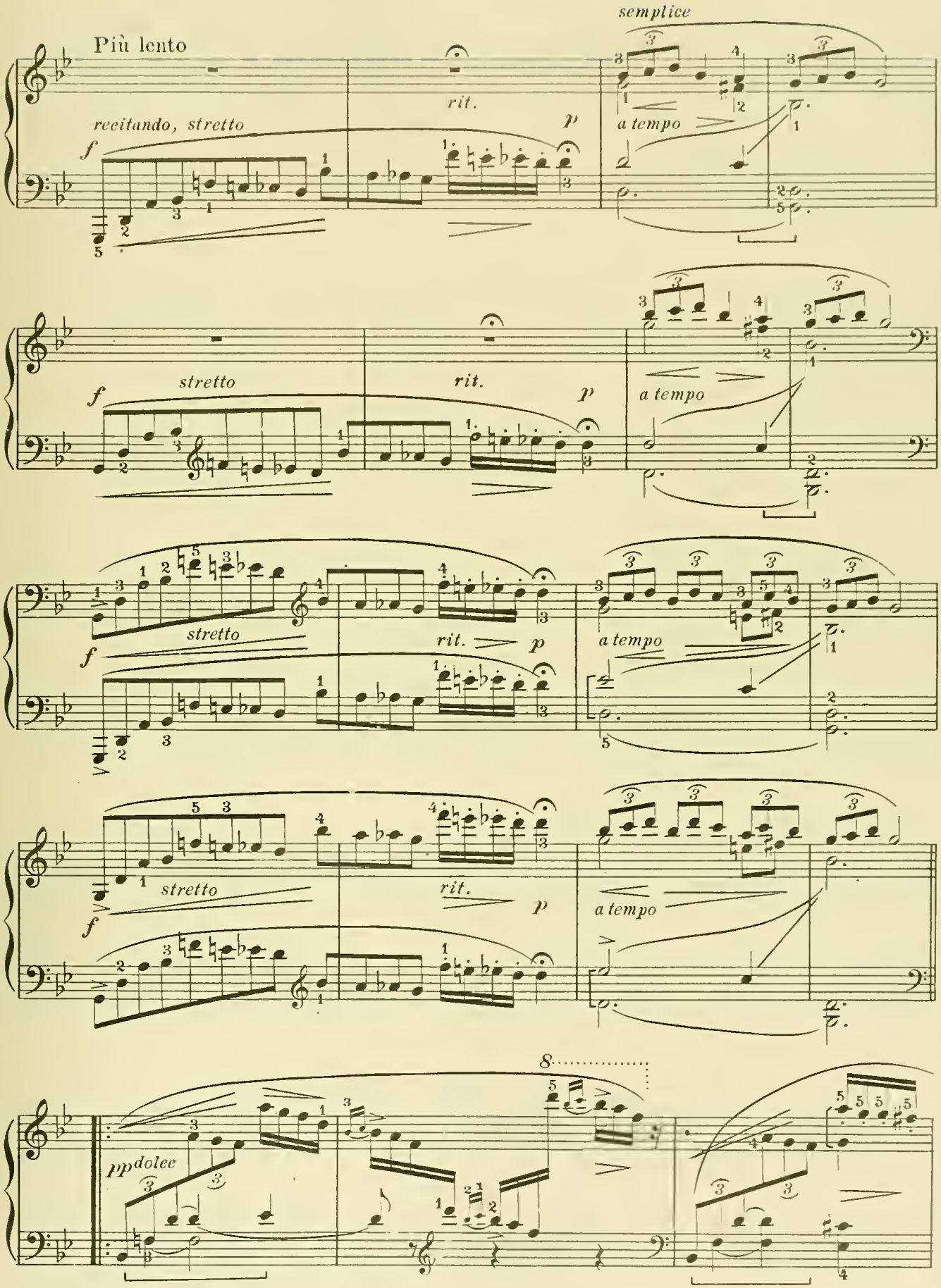

Poco meno andante, ma molto tranquillo
pp
segue
cresc.
l.h.
pp
r.h.
dim.
poco rit.
pp
Poco animato
mp
segue
poco tenuto
animato
cresc.
poco ten.
più tranquillo
1.
2.
rit.
pp

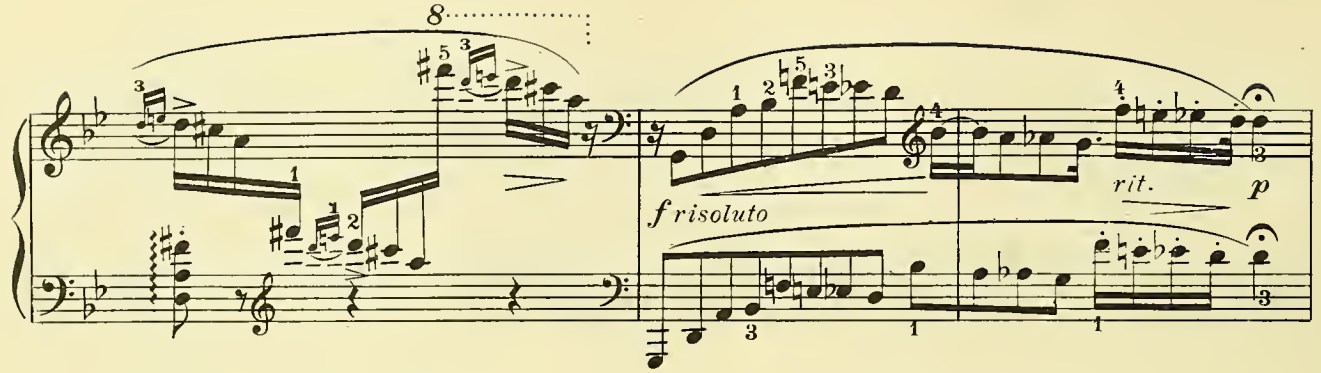

Allegro agitato
p
cresc.
cresc.
f
ff
rit.
fz
8
pp
dolcissimo
p
a tempo.

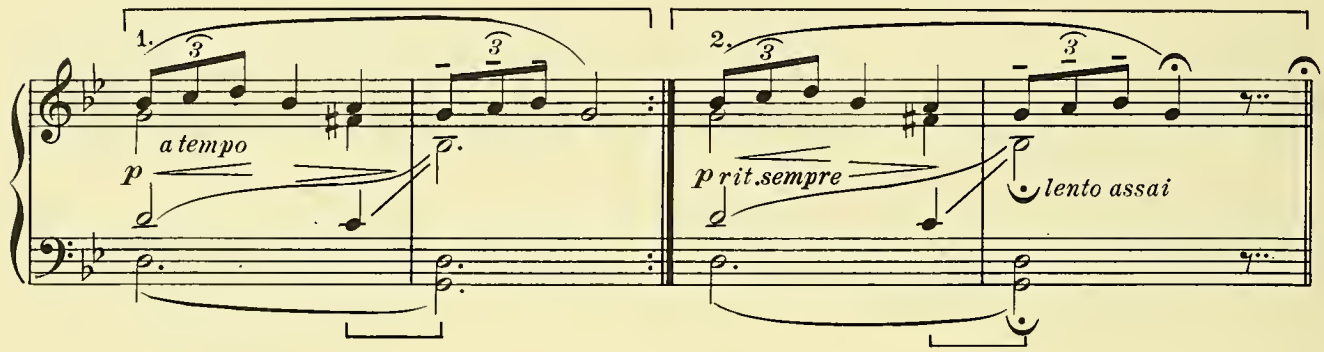

8
p
dolcissimo
pp
p
cresc.
poco sosten.
ff
rit.
fz
Adagio
assai legato
pp
mf
la melodia molto tenuta
pp
molto espressivo
pp

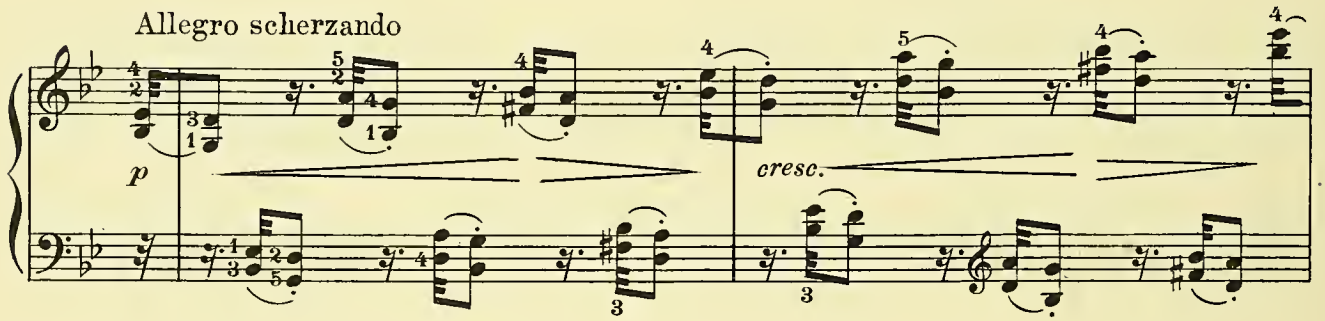

p
una corda
Stretto ed agitato
mf
tre corde
Lento
rit. poco a poco
p a tempo
rit. poco a poco
fz
pp
ppp

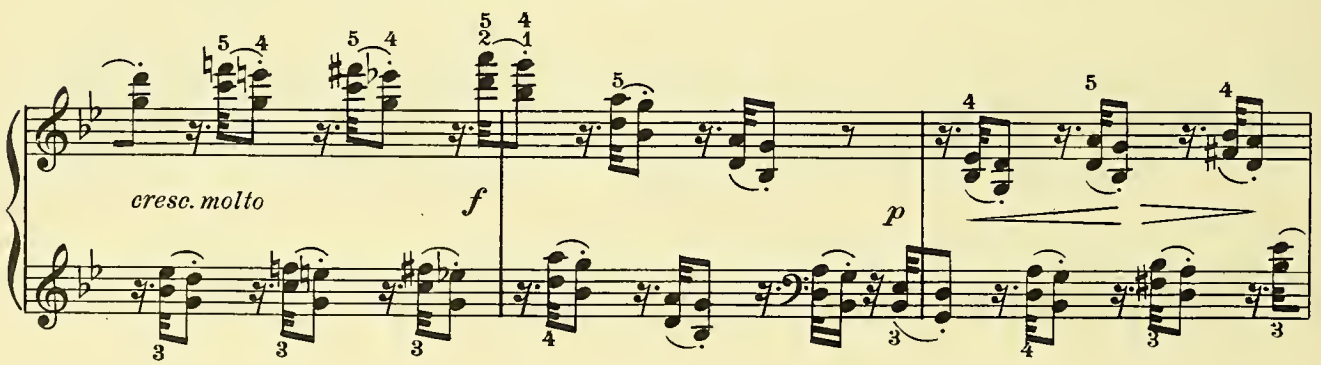

Allegro capriccioso
p
leggiero
leggiero
pp
poco riten.
a tempo
fp
fp
1.
2.
poco rit. pp

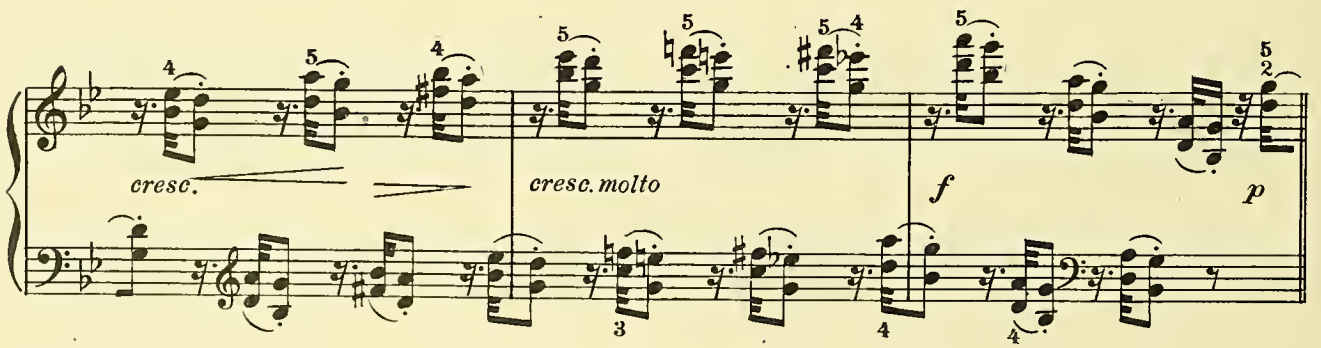

Più lento
semplice
recitando, stretto
f
rit.
p
a tempo
stretto
f
rit.
p
a tempo
stretto
f
rit.
p
a tempo
stretto
f
rit.
p
a tempo
8
pp dolce

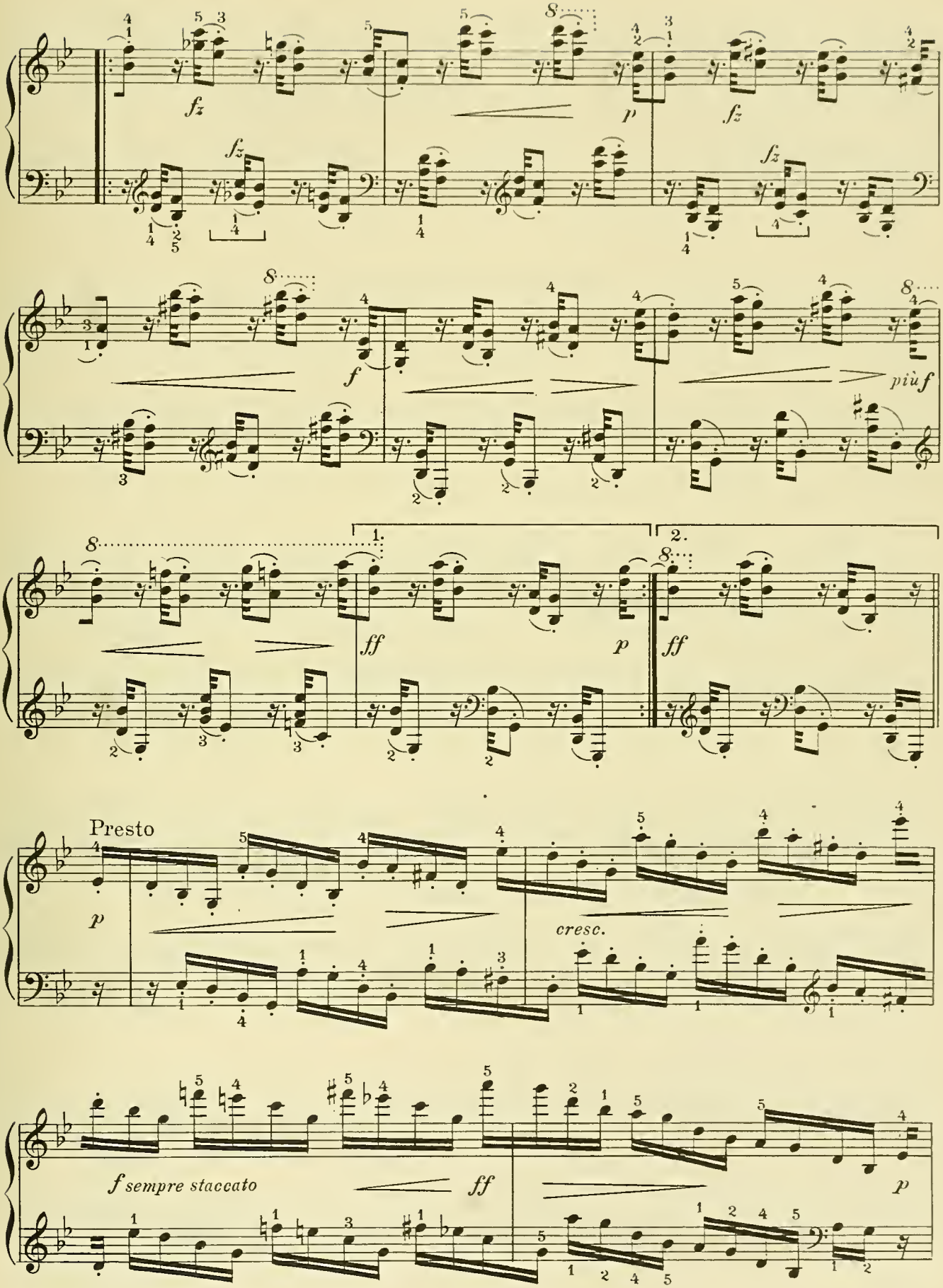

8
f risoluto
rit.
p

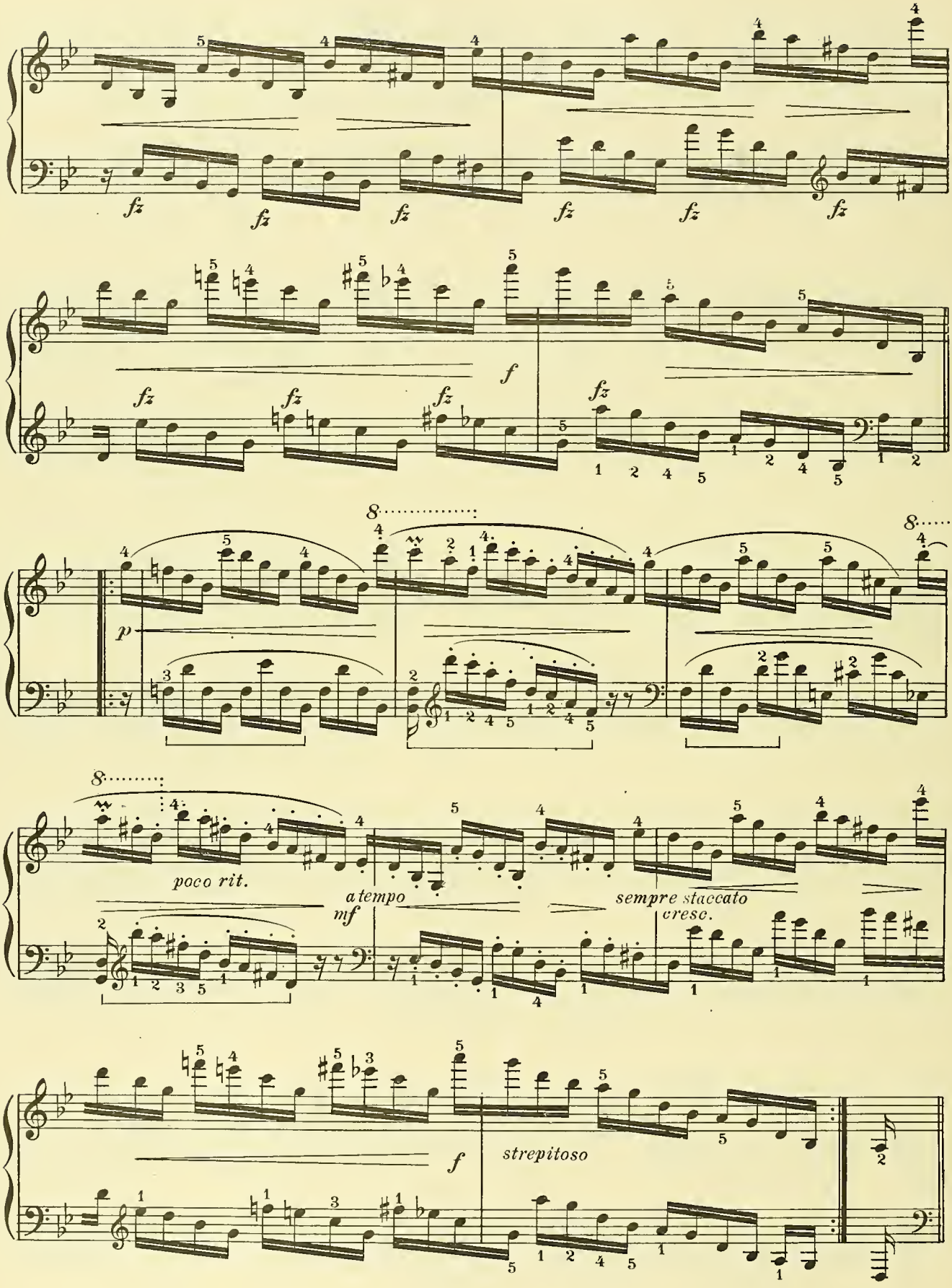

1.
2.
a tempo
p
p rit. sempre
lento assai

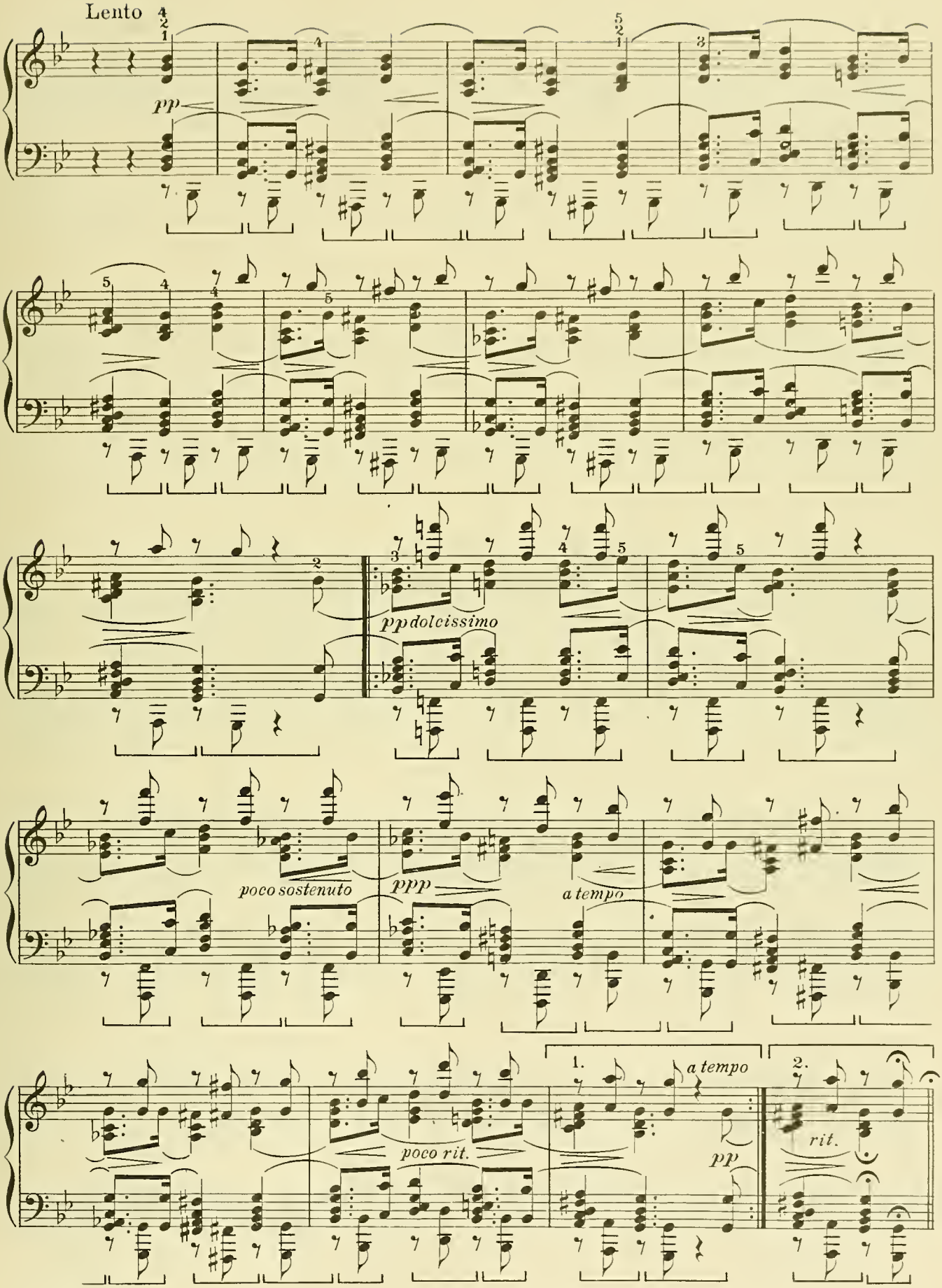

Allegro scherzando
p
cresc.

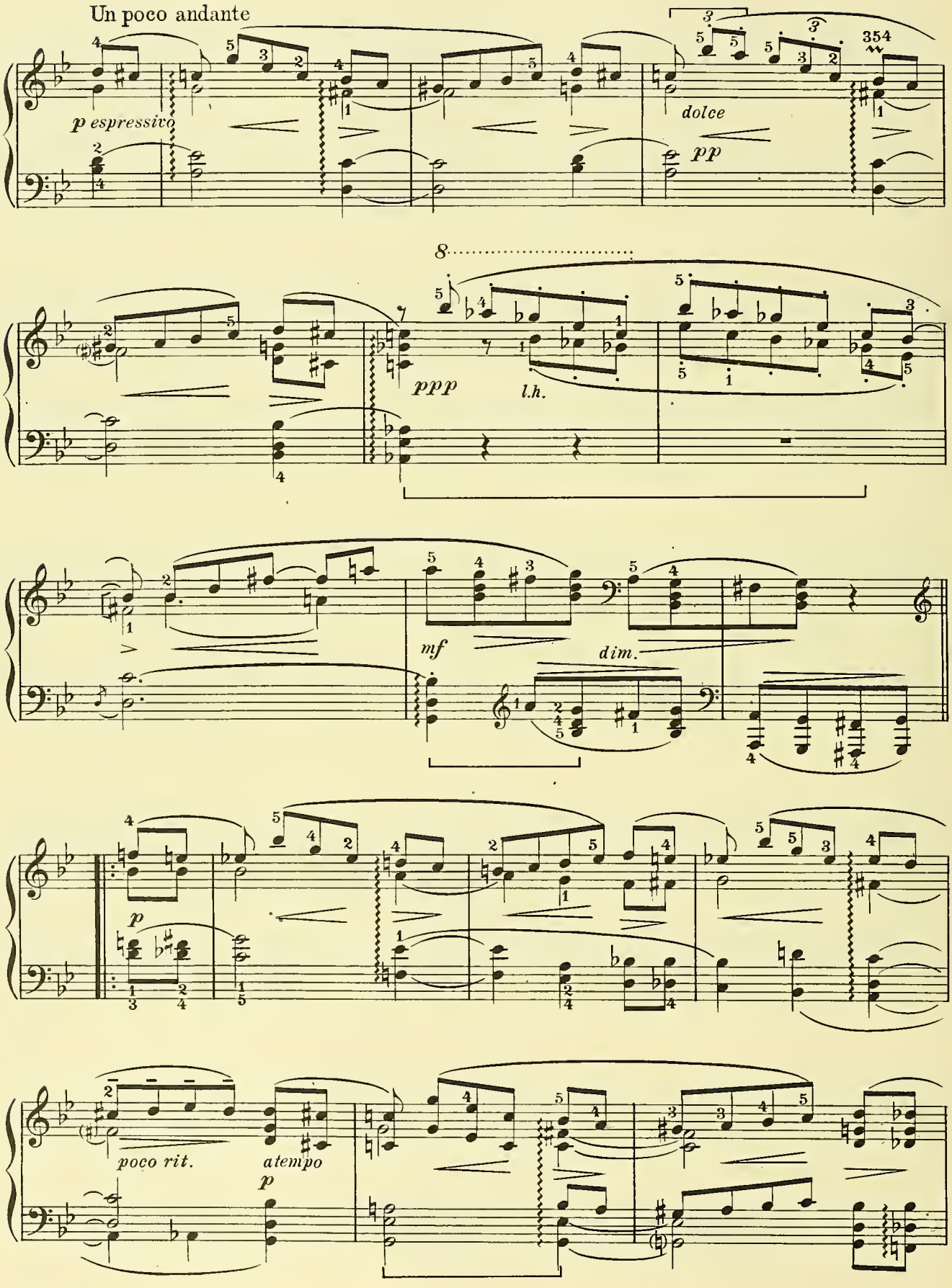

cresc. molto
f
p

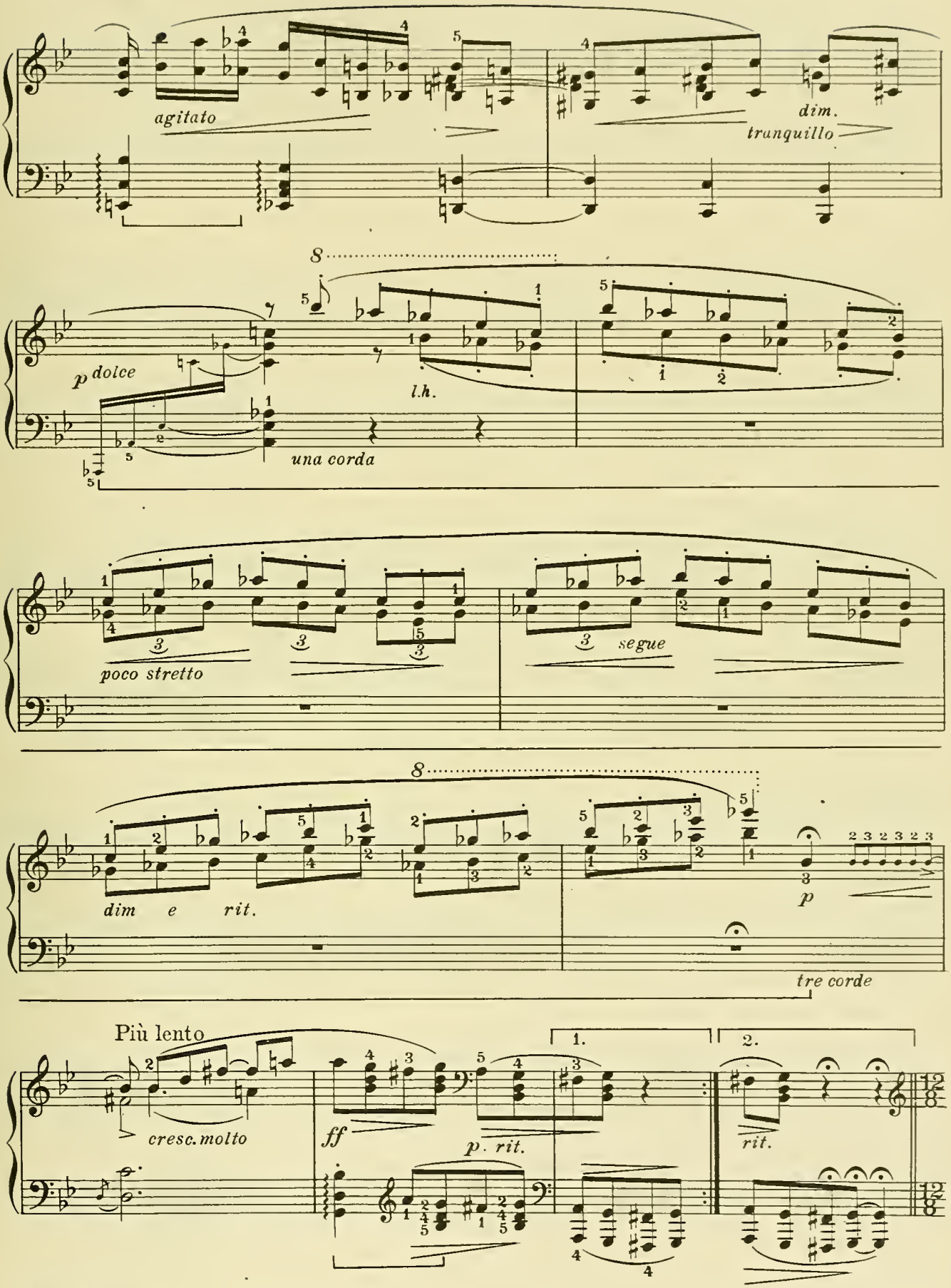

cresc.
cresc. molto
f
p

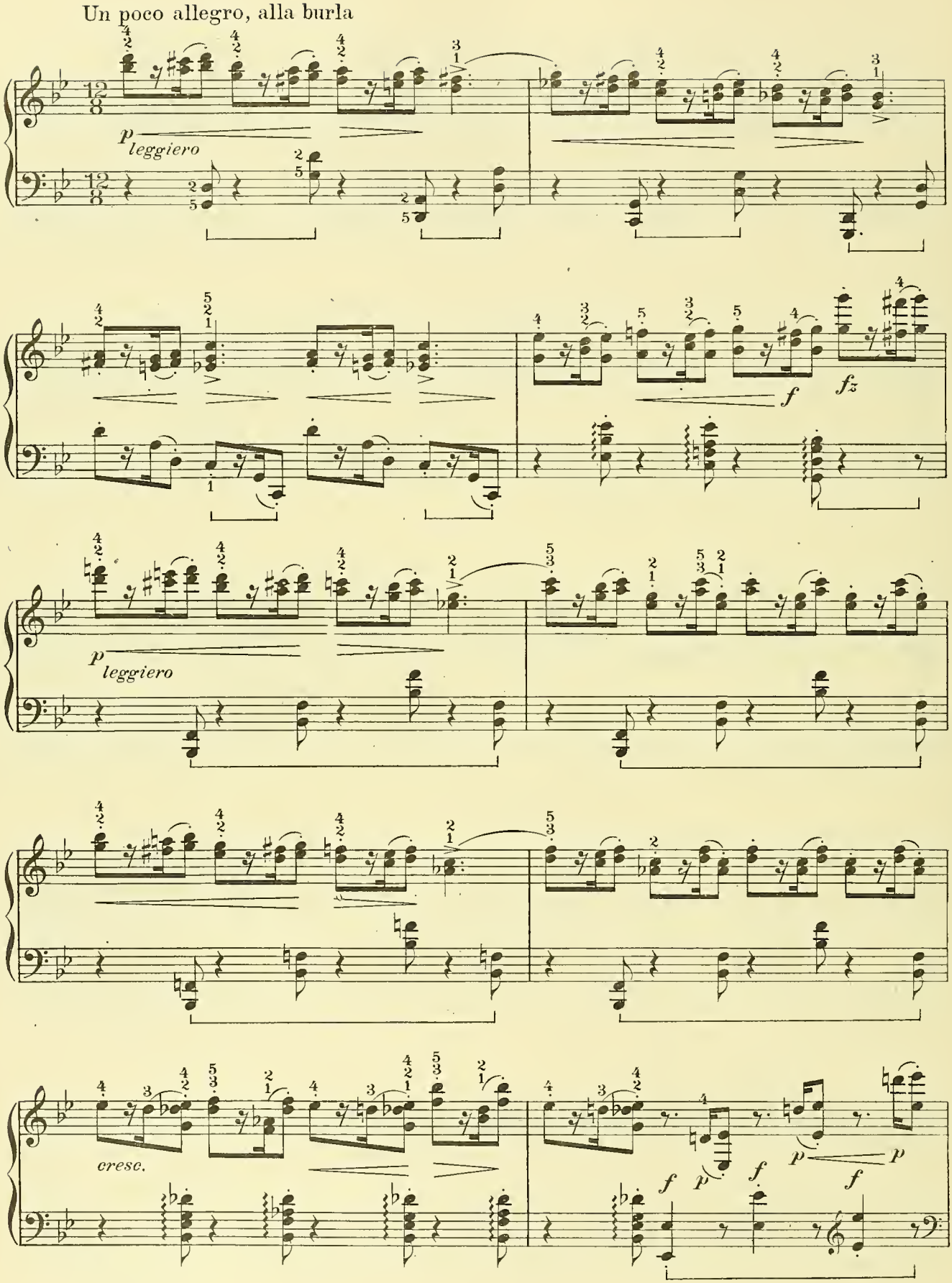

fz
fz
fz
fz
p
fz
f
più f
1.
2.
ff
p
ff
Presto
p
cresc.
f sempre staccato
ff
p

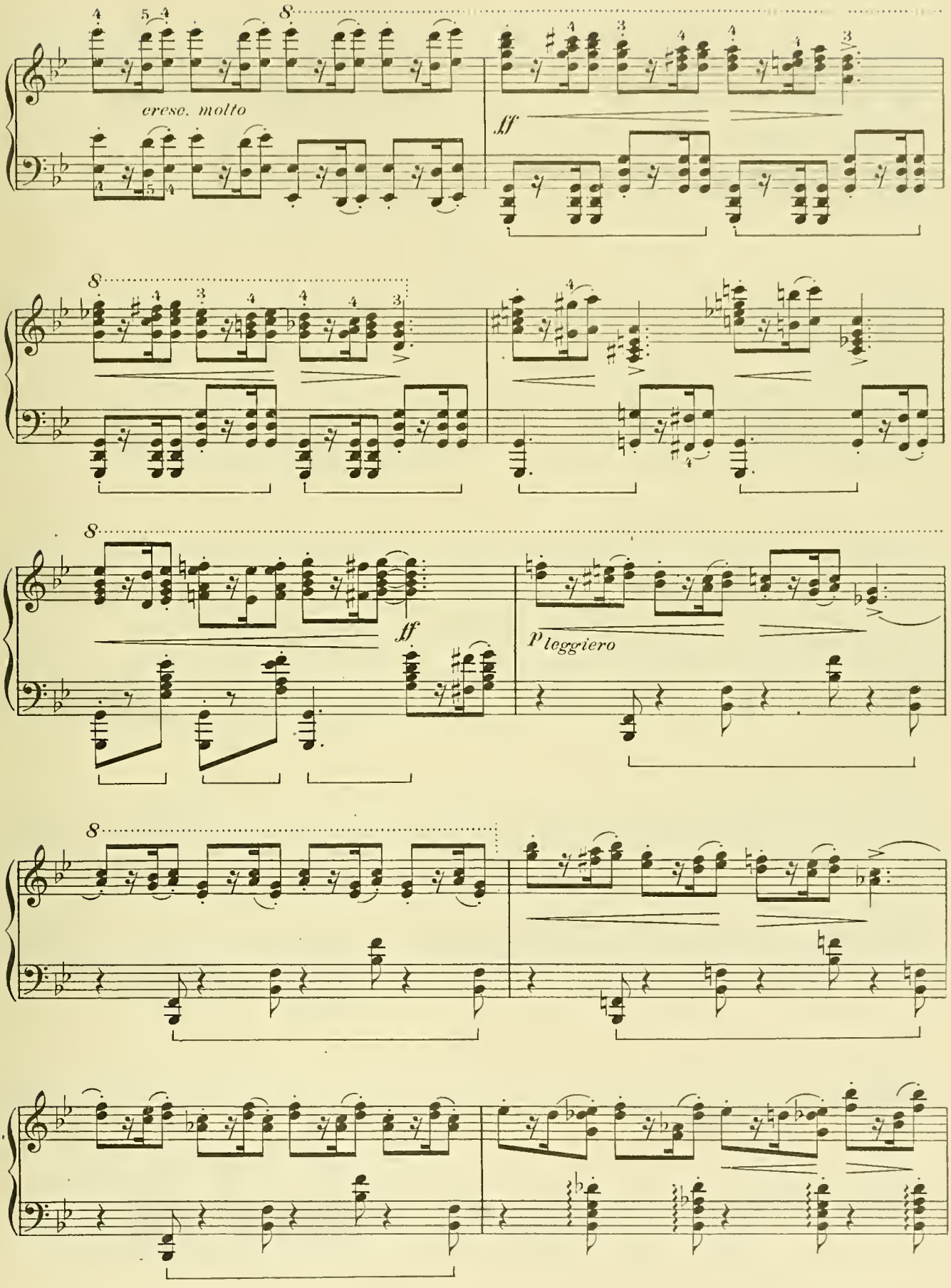

fz
f
p
poco rit.
a tempo
mf
sempre staccato
cresc.
strepitoso

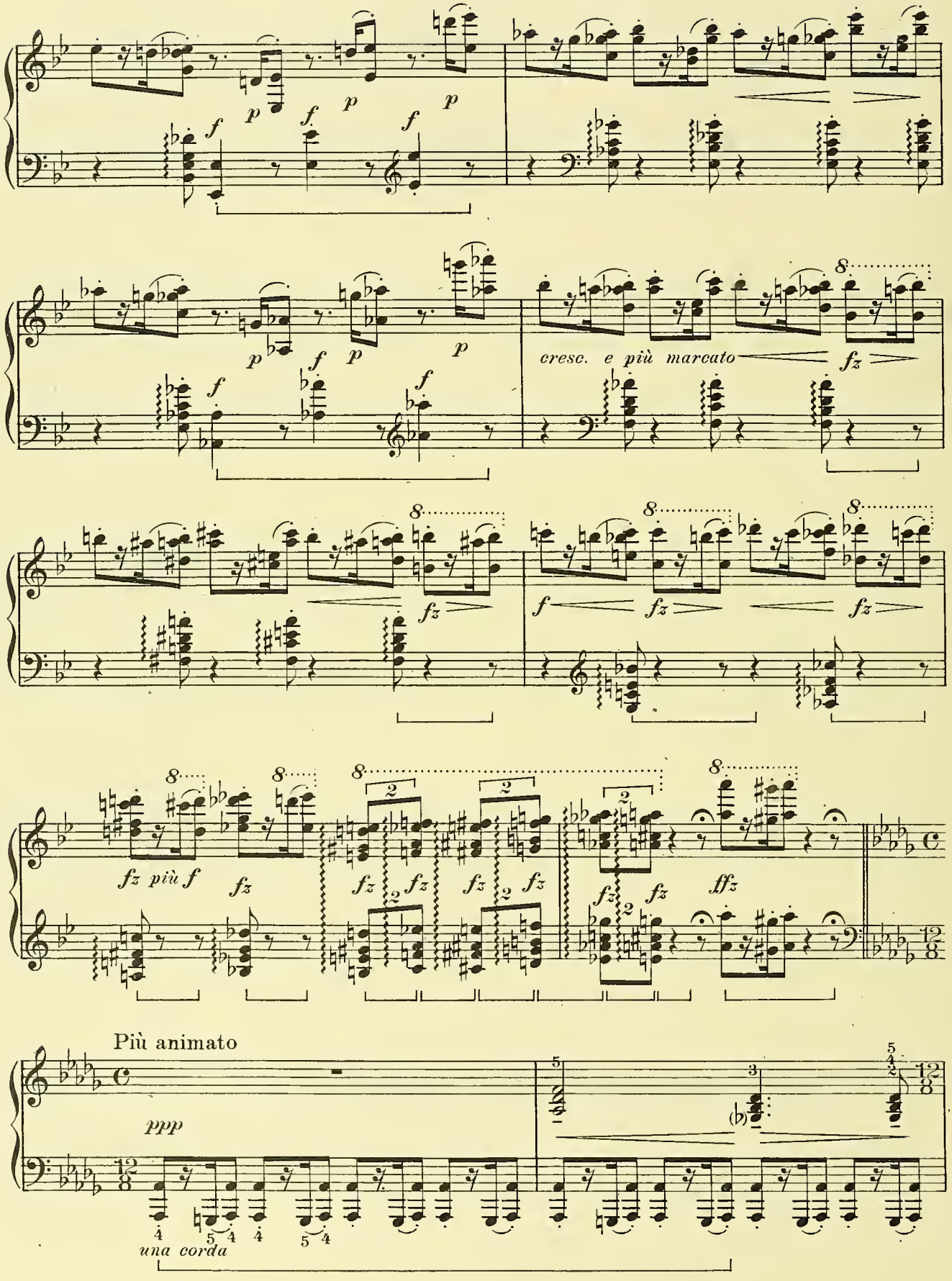

Lento
pp
ppdolcissimo
poco sostenuto
ppp
a tempo
poco rit.
1.
a tempo
pp
2.
rit.

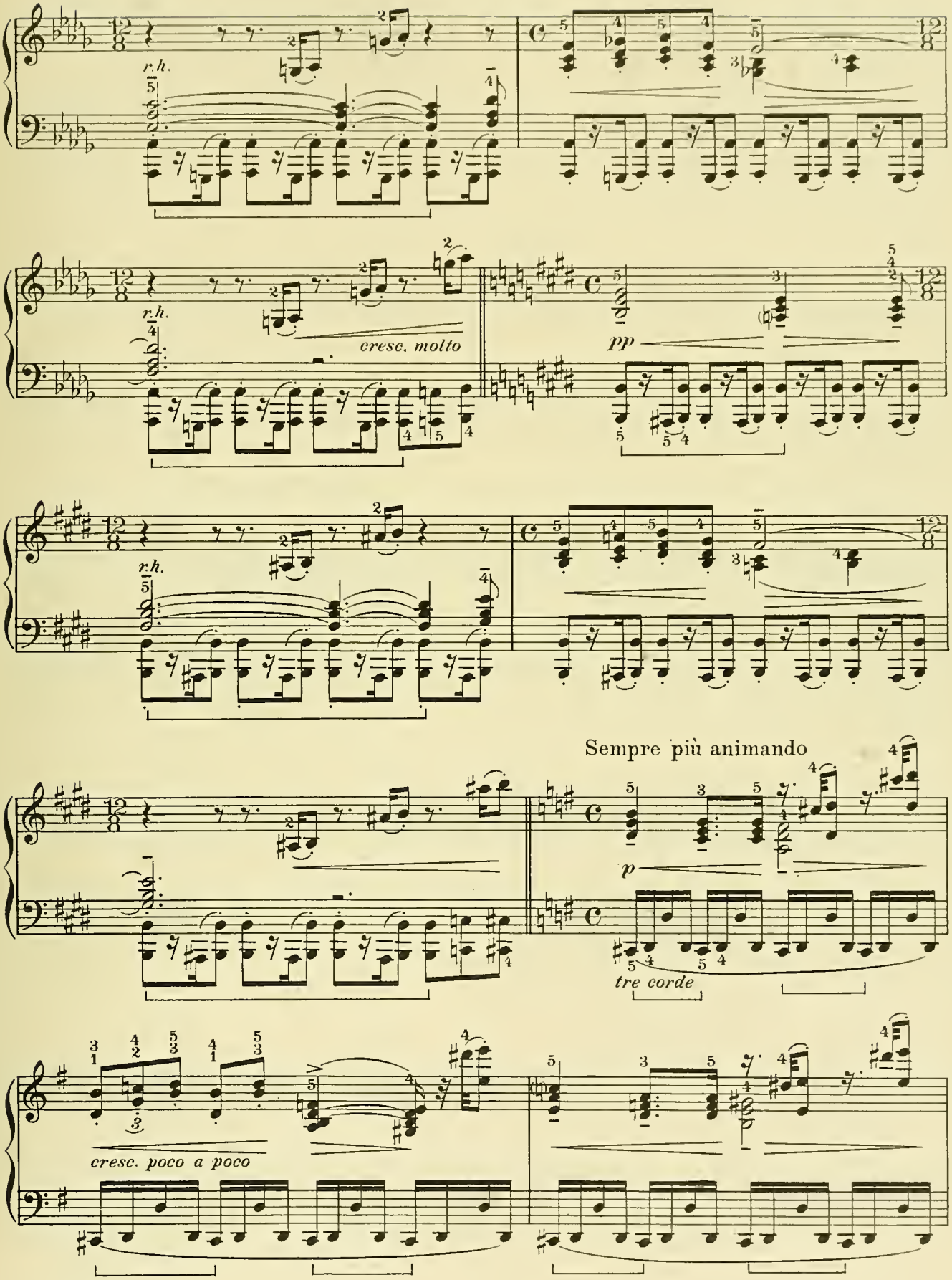

Un poco andante
p espressivo
dolce
pp
8
ppp
l.h.
mf
dim.
p
poco rit.
atempo
p

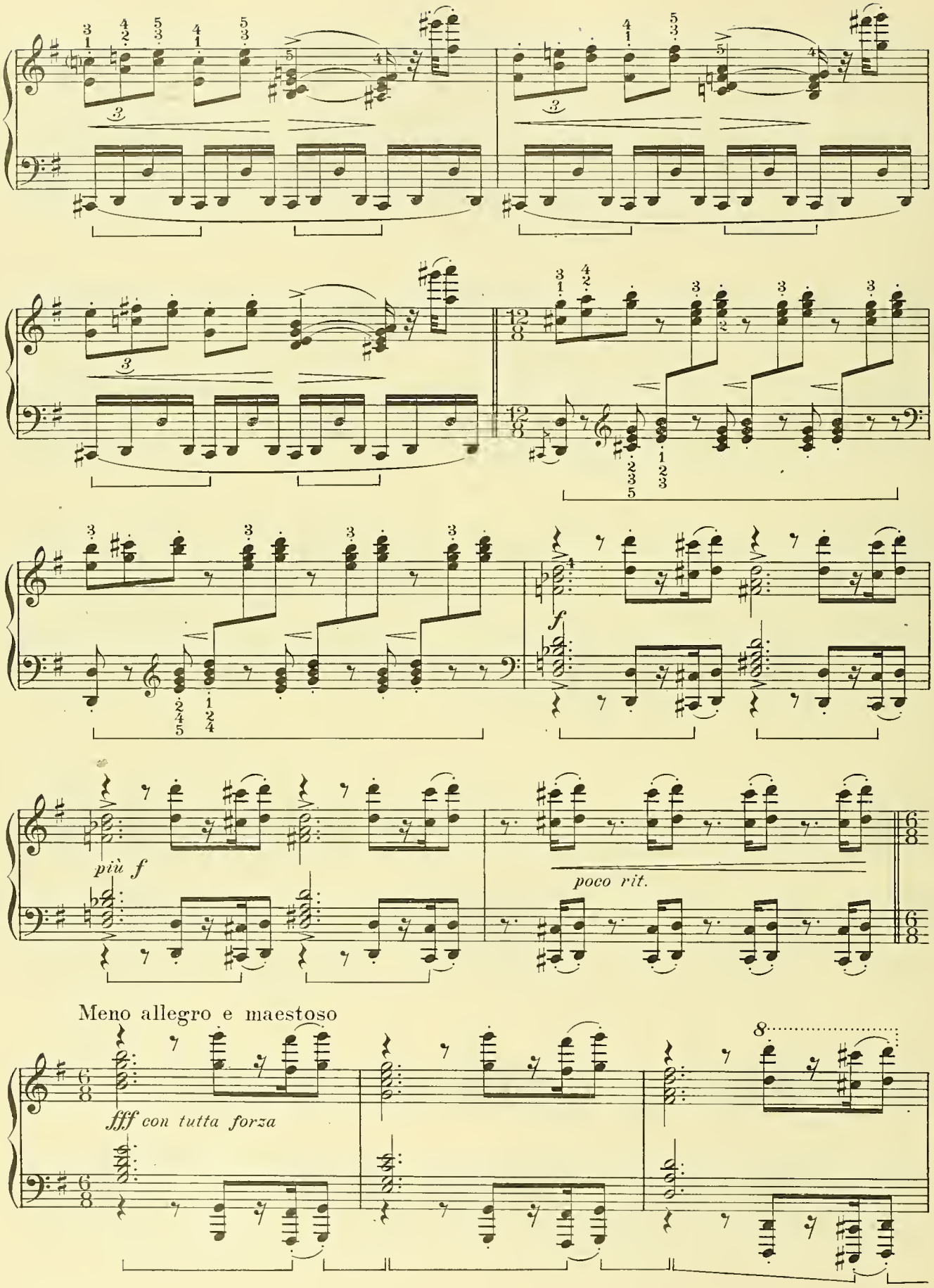

agitato
dim.
tranquillo
p dolce
una corda
l.h.
poco stretto
segue
dim e rit.
p
tre corde
Più lento
cresc. molto
ff
p. rit.
rit.
1.
2.

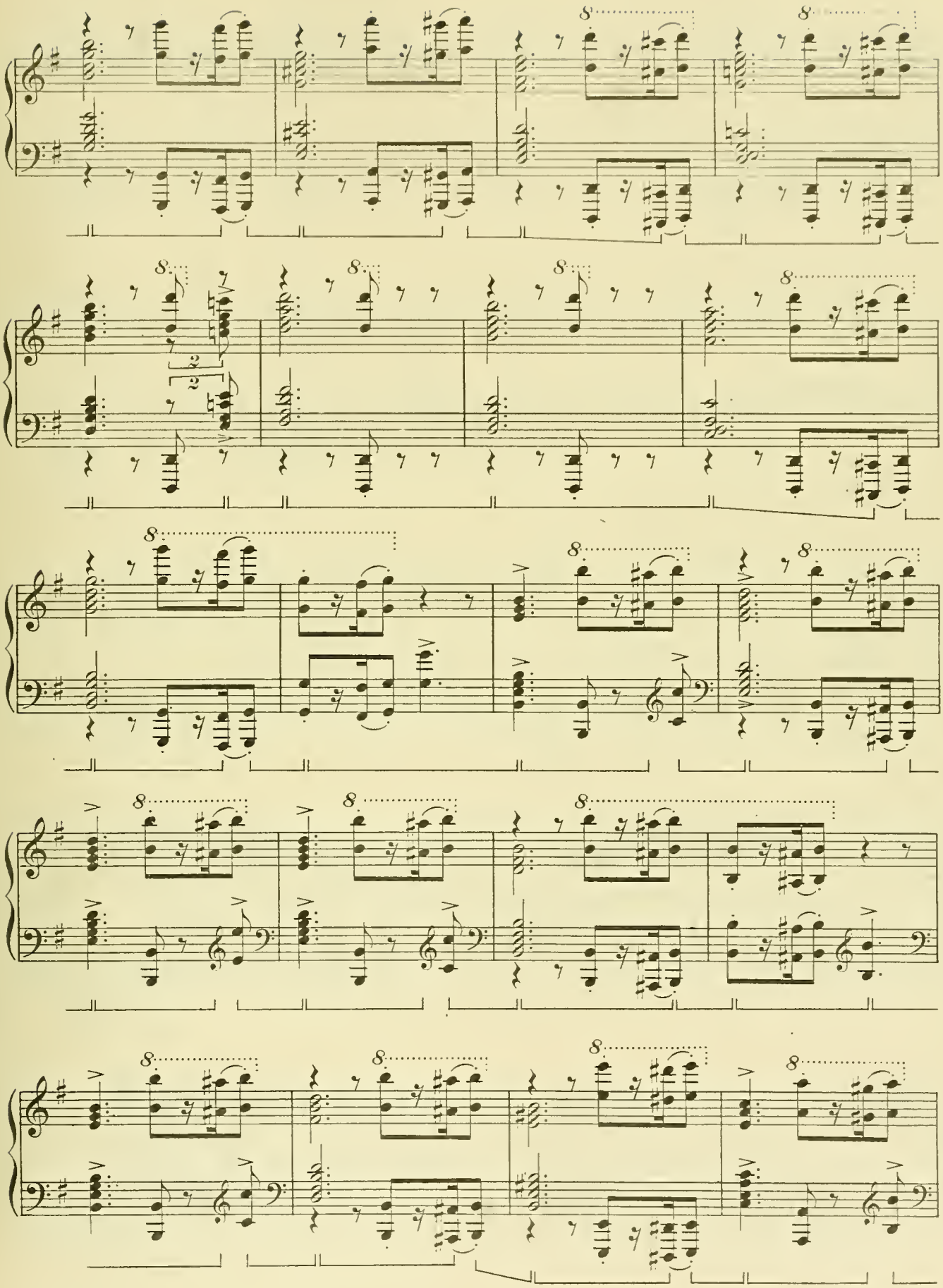

Un poco allegro, alla burla
p leggiero
f
fz
p leggiero
cresc.
f
p
f
p
f
p
f

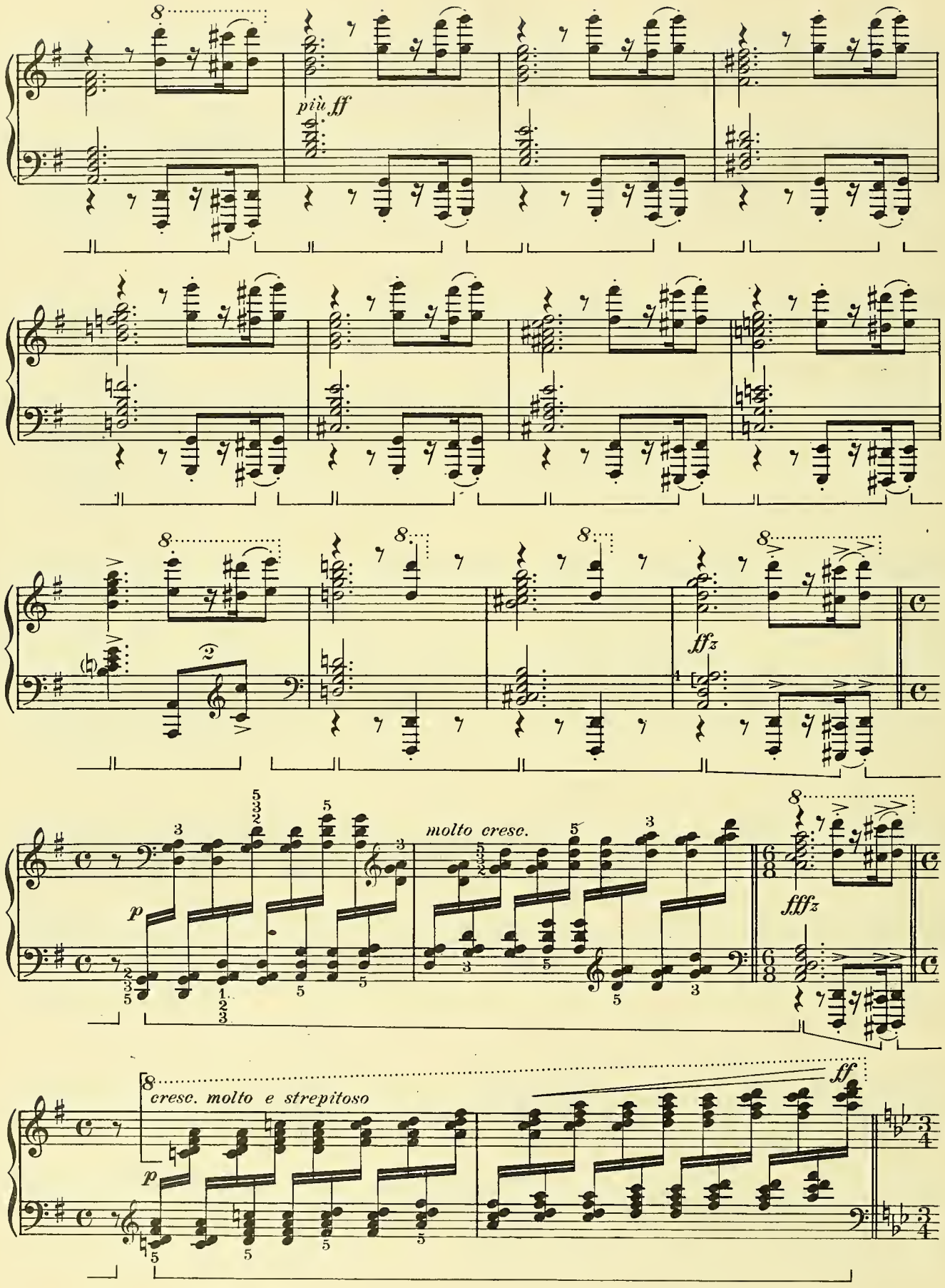

cresc. molto
ff
ff
p leggiero

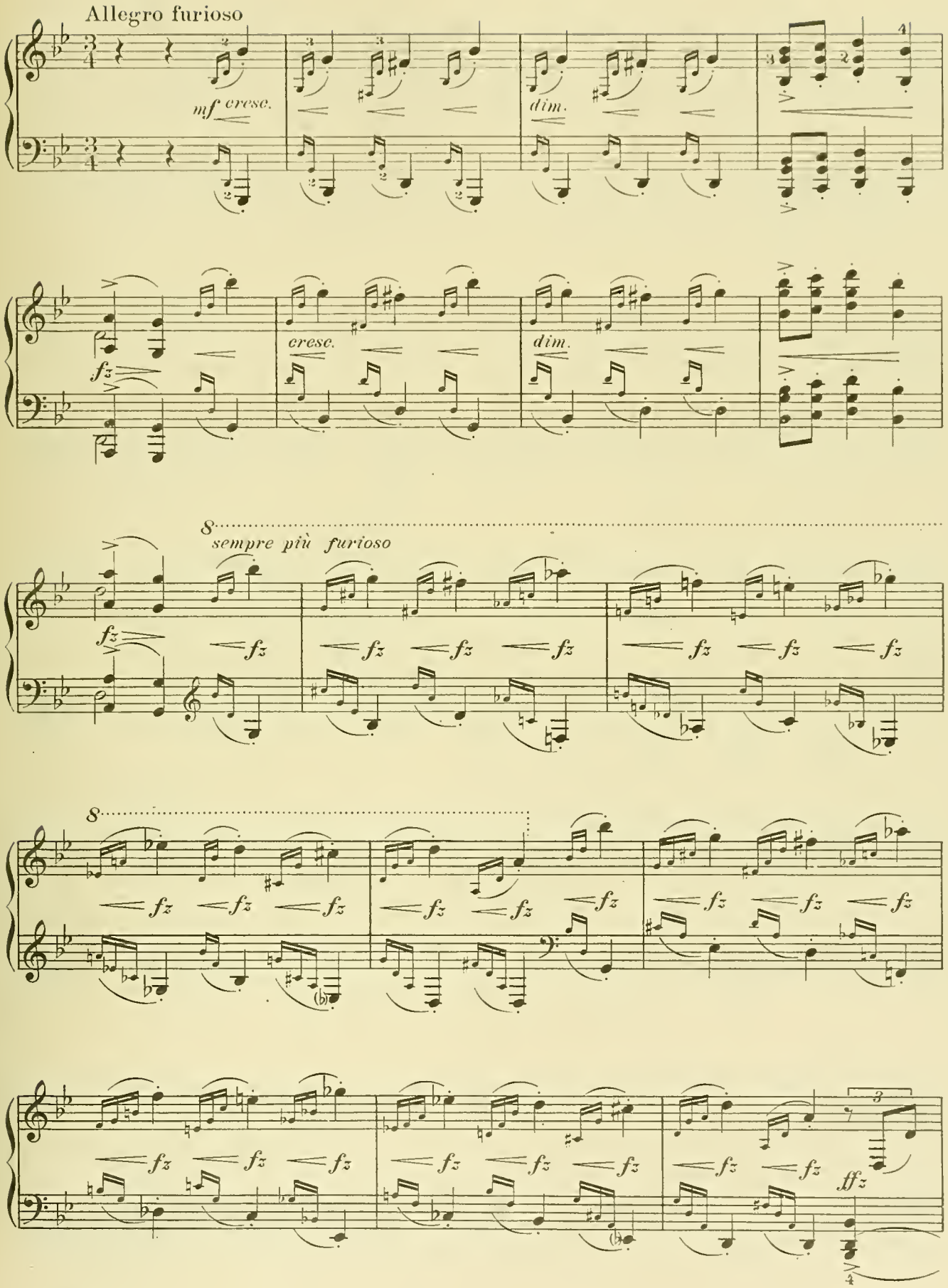

cresc. e più marcato
fz più f
Più animato
ppp
una corda

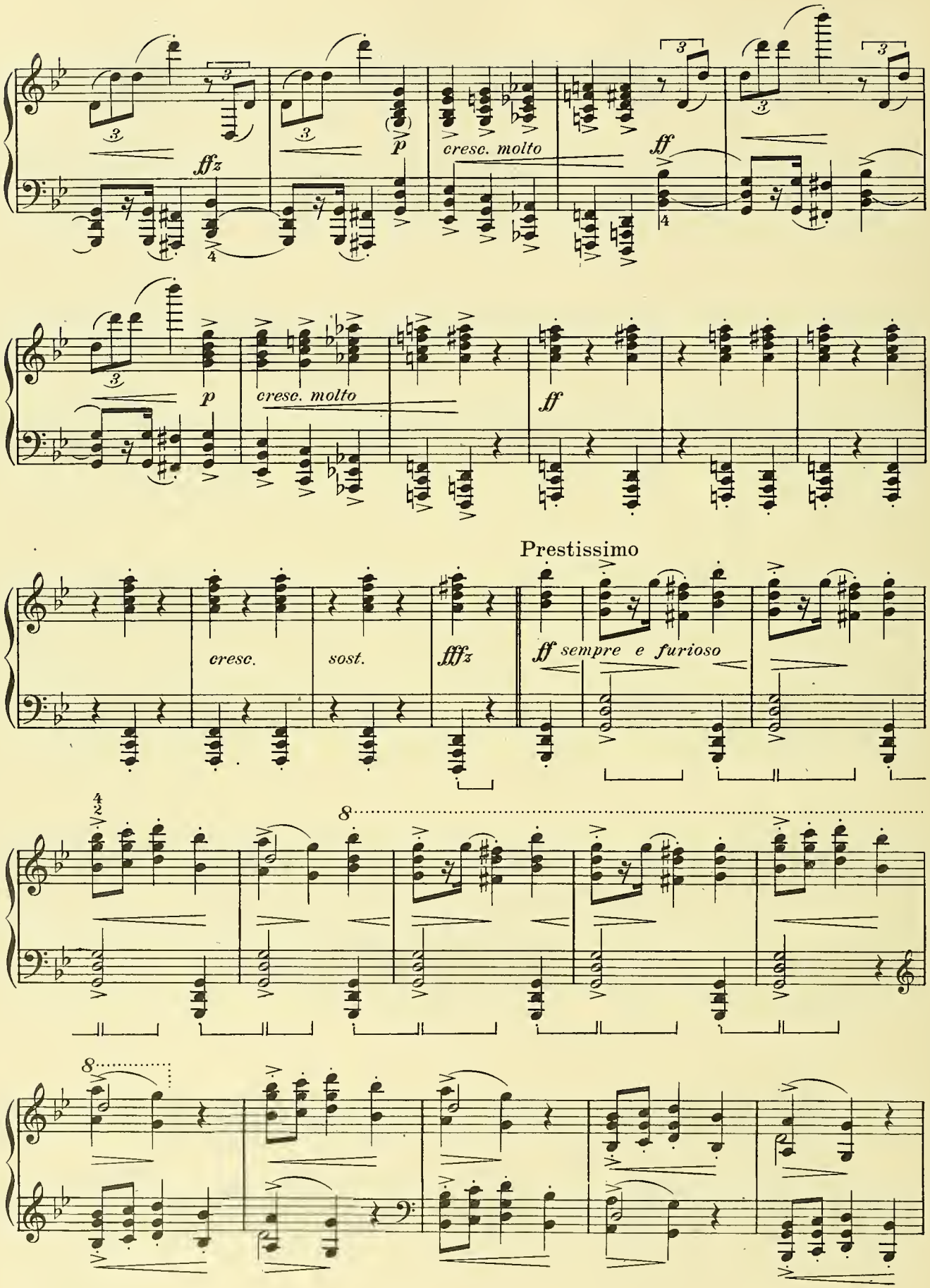

r.h.
r.h.
cresc. molto
pp
r.h.
Sempre più animando
p
tre corde
cresc. poco a poco

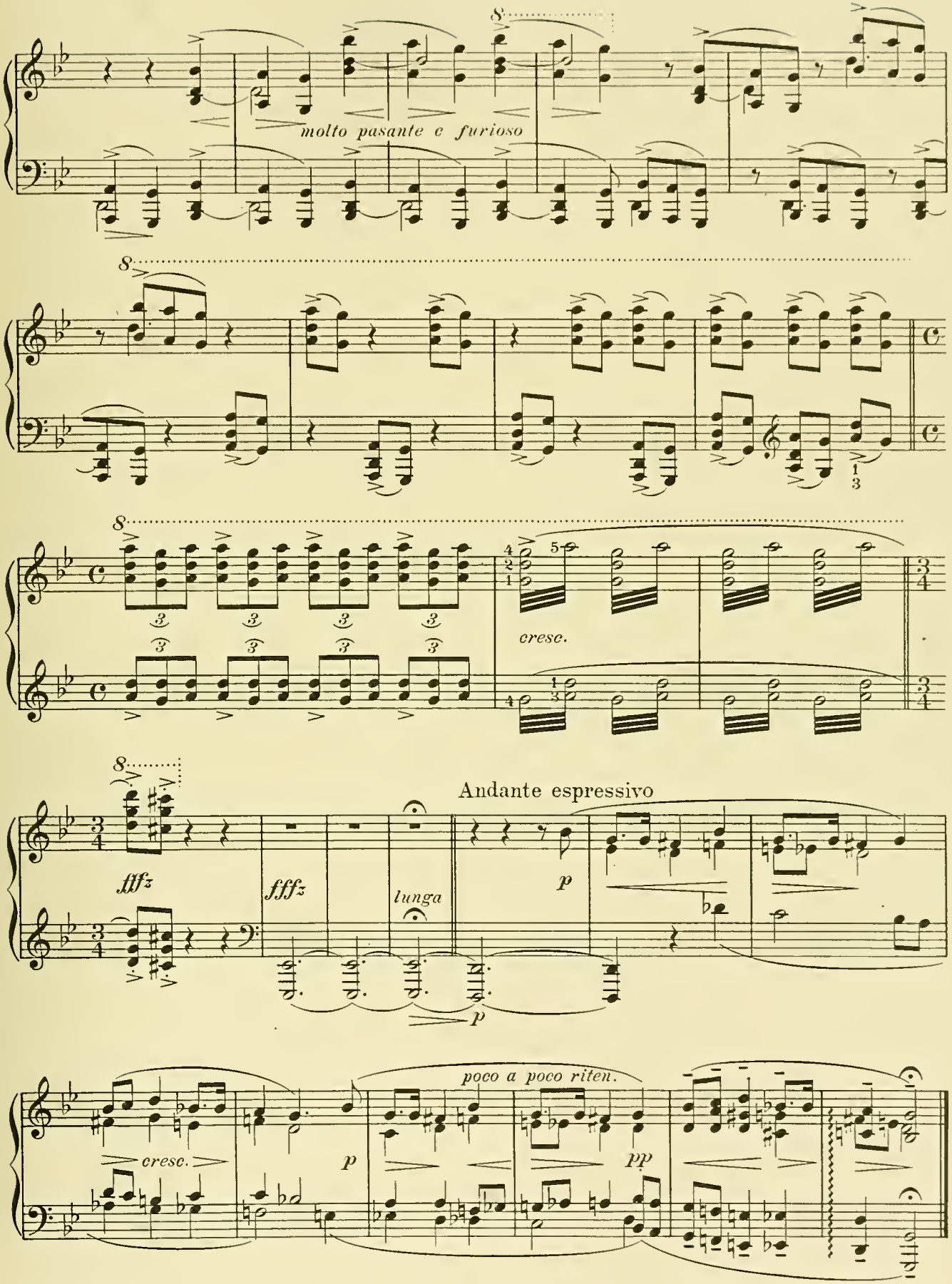

più f
poco rit.
Meno allegro e maestoso
fff con tutta forza




più ff
fffz
molto cresc.
fffz
cresc. molto e strepitoso
ff


Allegro furioso
mf cresc.
dim.
cresc.
dim.
fz
8
sempre più furioso
8
ffz


fffz
p
cresc. molto
ff
p
cresc. molto
ff
Prestissimo
cresc.
sost.
fffz
ff sempre e furioso


molto pasante e furioso
cresc.
Andante espressivo
fffz
fffz
lunga
p
p
cresc.
p
poco a poco riten.
pp

MEMORANDA

MEMORANDA

MEMORANDA

CHAPTER EXAMINATION

1. What is the meaning of the word Ballade as applied to a musical composition?

2. What are the years of Grieg's birth and death? What was his nationality?

3. In what form is the Ballade composed?

4. Analyze the harmonic basis of the Theme.

5. What is meant by "elegiac quality" recommended for Var. III?

6. What is the effect of the accent on the third count of the measure in Var. IV?

7. Why should a pause be made at the close of Var. VII?

8. What is suggested by the picture of a cortege passing in the distance, in playing Var. VIII?

9. Why should the *una corda* and the Damper Pedal be used in Var. IX?

10. How can the Double Trill in Var. XI be best executed?

Student Percentage

Examined by Date

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC
NEW YORK